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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 13, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DOUG COLLINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

SEQUESTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the President spoke to us last night and he talked to us about avoiding the sequester. I was at a political event being interviewed and a gentleman, Mr. POMPEO from Kansas, was with us as well, and he spoke before I did. He talked about the sequester and he said:

It's going to be a home run. We're doing what the American people ask the United States House of Representatives to do in 2010 when I came here.

He then said, in referring to the sequester:

I think the American people . . . will have tremendous respect for what its House of Representatives led and what its Federal Government was able to accomplish.

A profound disagreement. I think the gentleman from Kansas is profoundly wrong. The sequester will have an extraordinarily negative effect on this country, on its people, on its economy, and on its national security, and I might say on the confidence that the world at large has in the United States' ability to pursue rational policy.

In the State of the Union address last night, Mr. Speaker, with regard to deficits, the President said this:

None of us will get 100 percent of what we want. But the alternative will cost us jobs, hurt our economy, and visit hardship on millions of hardworking Americans.

He went on to say:

The greatest Nation on Earth cannot keep conducting its business by drifting from one manufactured crisis to the next.

Every 30 days, every 60 days, every 90 days, a manufactured crisis, evidence of a dysfunctional and willful Congress.

He went on to say:

Let's agree right here, right now, to keep the people's Government open, pay our bills on time, and always uphold the full faith and credit of the United States of America.

That seems to be reasonable policy.

We now have two and a half weeks before the sequester takes effect, with devastating consequences for our economy and national security, yet the gentleman from Kansas welcomes that policy. In fact, the Republican leadership of this House has not put a single bill on the floor in this Congress that would have any impact on avoiding the sequester.

We now find ourselves facing yet another manufactured crisis. Instead of preventing it, as I've said, Republicans appear to be willing and enthusiastically welcoming the sequester.

Mr. Speaker, every American ought to take note of that enthusiasm for an

irrational policy, referred to as irrational by its own leader, Mr. CANTOR, who said it was not the way we ought to do business. He's right, but he's brought nothing to the floor to avoid it.

The sequester, though, was meant to be so undesirable an outcome that it would force us to agree on a better approach. It married the worst consequences for both parties when it came to spending cuts: indiscriminate cuts to the defense budget alongside cuts to critical domestic programs.

In politics, often the key to compromise is crafting a package that contains something, some provision that everyone can love, although everyone will not love every provision. Here, Congress took the opposite approach and included something everyone could despise.

A faction of the majority, which is not a majority of this House by itself, has become so zealous in its drive to pursue a spending-only approach that it has embraced the sequester's Draconian cuts. Mr. POMPEO's quote this morning affirms that assertion.

They've used their clout within the majority to hold Congress hostage from one manufactured crisis to the next, and they nearly brought us to the edge of default for a second time last year. There have been several reports in a number of news outlets that Speaker BOEHNER promised their faction that the topline for appropriations would not exceed the level it would be after sequestration cuts, already adopting the premise that sequestration has gone into effect.

It was further reported that while the sequester levels would be kept, the cuts would be rearranged in order to protect defense spending at the further detriment to domestic parties, like NIH, cancer research, heart research, prostate cancer research, diabetes research, all the other maladies that—Dr. BERA is sitting here shaking his

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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